

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management  
LAND ACQUISITION AND PROTECTION PROGRAM

**FISCAL YEAR 2002  
ANNUAL REPORT**



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For general information regarding the DEM Land Acquisition and Protection Program, please call 617 626-1315, or log on to our web site at [www.mass.gov/dem/programs/landacq](http://www.mass.gov/dem/programs/landacq)

### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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### **Office of Commonwealth Development**

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### **Executive Office of Environmental Affairs**

Ellen Roy Herzfelder, Secretary

### **Department of Environmental Management**

Peter C. Webber, Commissioner

### **Office of Legal Services**

Mary Griffin, Chief

### **Land Acquisition and Protection Program**

Irene Del Bono, Director

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO CHRISTINE BERRY,  
DEM LAND ACQUISITION SPECIALIST, FOR  
HER DEDICATED COMMITMENT TO COMPIL-  
ING, EDITING, AND PRODUCING THE 1999  
THROUGH 2002 ANNUAL REPORTS HIGH-  
LIGHTING THE WORK OF THE DEM'S LAND  
ACQUISITION PROGRAM.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Dear Friends:

Fiscal Year 2002 (July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002) was another exceptional year for the Department of Environmental Management's (DEM) Land Acquisition and Protection Program. With the help of many partners, DEM protected 74 properties totaling just over 11,385 acres. Never before has DEM acquired so many properties totaling so many acres in any one fiscal year.

Recent legislation will ensure the continued success of DEM's Land Acquisition and Protection Program. In August of 2002, a new law was signed creating a \$707 million Environmental Bond bill, the largest environmental bond in Massachusetts history. This Bond replenished funding for many critical state environmental programs including open space acquisition, capital improvements at state parks and forests, pollution prevention and cleanup, and grants to cities and towns for the protection of open space. DEM's portion of the Environmental Bond will ensure that DEM continues its work of protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Massachusetts.

In spring of 2002, our agency also completed a Strategic Plan entitled "Shaping Our Future: A Strategic Agenda for the Department of Environmental Management." This plan reflects broad agreement around a number of key goals or focus areas which will define the future of natural and cultural resource management in Massachusetts. These goals – providing high quality protection of resources, working with partners, and diversifying financial resources – have been embraced by DEM's Land Acquisition and Protection Program staff.

As you read through this report, you will learn more about the diverse properties DEM works to protect and how DEM works with our many partners on the federal, state, local, and nonprofit level, as well as private donors, to achieve our land protection goals across the Commonwealth. We have chosen to highlight many of our projects that exemplify this diversity throughout this report. I truly hope you take the opportunity to visit these properties and experience all they have to offer firsthand.

Lastly, I invite you to join us as we continue to protect valuable properties throughout the state. Your contribution to DEM's Conservation Trust will help us to acquire additional land and provide funds needed for the perpetual care and stewardship of these valuable assets.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Peter C. Webber".

Peter C. Webber  
Commissioner

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW: 2002 PROJECTS

The following projects were completed in Fiscal Year 2002 (July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002). With the help of our partners, just over 11,385 acres of land was acquired or protected. DEM acquired most of these properties outright, through “fee acquisition.” The remaining projects were protected through conservation restrictions (which essentially remove the right to develop a property).

Project	Town	Significance	Acreage
Antell	Spencer/ E. Brookfield	Diverse property with agricultural land, wetland, and upland	278 acres
Ainsworth	Deerfield	Part of a multi-year effort to protect the Pocumtuck Range	12 acres
Brockway	South Hadley	Protects rare species and trails	44 acres
Brzys	Agawam	Secures significant inholding within Robinson State Park	6.5 acres
Chestnut Hill (5 Properties)	Orange	Protects the summit and environs of Chestnut Hill	324 acres
Farrick	Conway	Critical adjacent land at Conway State Forest	83 acres
Govoni/McGuire	Falmouth	Critical parcel along the Child's River	18.5 acres
Granby AFB	Granby	Contains a sand plain habitat at the base of Mount Holyoke	100 acres
Grogan	Greenfield	Protects scenic parcel along the Pocumtuck Ridge	6.4 acres
Town of Hatfield	Hatfield	Acquisition protects watershed and large unfragmented forest	354.4 acres
Hawes	Dartmouth/ Fall River	Continued expansion of the Southeastern Mass. Bioserve	294 acres
Hawks	Deerfield	Part of a multi-year effort to protect the Pocumtuck Range	8 acres
Hawks II	Deerfield	Part of a multi-year effort to protect the Pocumtuck Range	5.5 acres
Hosmer Woods	Orange	Gift conservation restriction protects large unfragmented parcel	198 acres
Howes	Ashfield	Protects diverse habitat including vernal pools and grassland	151 acres
Keedje Farm	Mt. Washington	Critical adjacent land at Mount Everett State Reservation	46 acres
Kogut	Hatfield	Contains the headwaters of the Hatfield River	132 acres
Krogh	Deerfield	Part of a multi-year effort to protect the Pocumtuck Range	15.5 acres
LaPlante	Kingston	Provides public access to the Jones River	1.3 acres
Lefebvre	Cheshire	Critical linkage between Mount Greylock and the Visitors Center	97 acres
Legg	Uxbridge	Protects scenic farm on the Blackstone River	42.7 acres
Levinger	Shutesbury/ Wendell	Contains multiple resource values including wetlands and forests	220 acres
Lucander	Westminster	Property located within a large complex of protected lands	41.8 acres
Mizzenmast	Mashpee	Preserves Native American burial ground	¼ acre

Project	Town	Significance	Acreage
McDowell	Douglas	Continued protection of Wallum Lake	¼ acre
Mount Tom	Holyoke	Multi-partner effort to protect the summit of Mt. Tom	234 acres
Mount Watatic	Ashburnham/ Ashby	Partnership effort to protect the summit of Mt. Watatic	281 acres
NEFF-Hartshorn	Ashburnham	Provides protection of the Midstate Trail	380.7 acres
Newman	Florida	Protects habitat for several rare species	89 acres
Robar	Westminster	Provides protection for Crow Hill and wetland habitat	55 acres
Town of Rowley	Rowley	Gift CR protects adjacent land and water resources	27.6 acres
Shores II	Barnardston	Provides crucial habitat for large mammals	318 acres
Spectacle Island	Boston	Gift to DEM that allows for the creation of a Visitor's Center	1 acre
Strawberry Hill	Ipswich	Provides public access to estuary and protects historic structures	106 acres
Sternagle	Middlefield	Improves access to Middlefield State Forest	210 acres
South Hadley Fire District	Hadley	Protects municipal watershed lands on the Holyoke Range	615.2 acres
Thompson Island	Boston	Secures the last unprotected Boston Harbor Island	240 acres
Tully Initiative (26 Properties)	Warwick, Orange, Royalston	Part of a multi-agency landscape protection project	1020.58 acres
Valley Land Fund	Deerfield	Part of a multi-year effort to protect the Pocumtuck Ridge	27 acres
Walent	Pepperell	Protects scenic parcel on the Nashua River	46 acres
Wojewoda	Hadley	Protects critical parcel on the Holyoke Range	11.5 acres

### Department of Environmental Protection Aquifer Land Acquisition Projects

The following six projects were part of the Department of Environmental Protection Aquifer Land Acquisition (DEP ALA) Program. This grant program provides partial reimbursements to municipalities and water commissions for their costs of acquiring land that will aid in the protection of water supply resources. The DEP ALA grant program requires a state agency to be granted a conservation restriction on property acquired. DEM worked with DEP, the following municipalities and water commissions to protect these critical properties:

Project	Acreage
Town of Bourne	10 acres
Town of Egremont	213 acres
Town of Ipswich	46 acres
Town of Lakeville	3583 acres
Town of Leverett	52.7 acres
Springfield Water & Sewer Commission	1339 acres





#### **Howes property, Ashfield:**

From Boston, take Rte. 2 to Rte. 112 in Buckland, turn south on Rte. 116 to Ashfield, turn right on Rte 116 westerly to Spruce Corner Road. Right on Spruce Corner Road 3 miles; property is on both sides of Spruce Corner Road abutting Roberts Lumber Yard.

#### **Mount Watatic, Ashburnham and Ashby:**

Rte. 2 to Rte. 31 north, through Fitchburg until it meets Rte. 119 in Ashby. Take Rte. 119 west through Ashby Center. After passing the town of Ashburnham sign, look for the Midstate Trail sign on the right. The parking lot is after the sign.

#### **Mount Tom, Holyoke:**

Take the Mass Pike to Rte. I-91 exit 4; go North on I-91. From I-91, take Exit 17 east (Holyoke) onto Rte..202; Rte. 202 to Rte 5, take a left at the lights on Rte. 5 and continue until the next full set of lights at the Jct. with Mt. Tom Road. Turn left up the hill, crossing over I-91, then bear right and continue up to the parking area at the former Mt. Tom ski lodge area.

#### **Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve (Howes), Freetown and Fall River:**

From the north: Take Rte. 24 south to exit 10. Bear left onto South Main Street. Turn left at four corners onto Rte. 79 north and right onto Elm Street which then turns into Slab Bridge Road; continue for 1.5 miles to the forest entrance.

#### **DEM Land Acquisition and Protection Staff**

Mary Griffin, Chief of Legal Services  
Irene Del Bono, Director of Land Protection  
Christine Berry, Land Protection Specialist  
David McGowan, Land Protection Specialist  
Nancy Reed, Land Protection Specialist  
Jennifer Howard, Greenways Program  
Terry Blunt, Connecticut River Valley Action Program  
Brenda Asegan, Realty and Finance Coordinator  
Dolores Boogdian, Counsel  
Frank Hartig, Counsel  
Nancy Mitchell, Counsel  
Marcos Pittore, Counsel  
Barbara Black, Paralegal



### **Strawberry Hill, Ipswich:**

From Boston: Take Rte. 1 north to Interstate 95, follow I-95 north to Rte. 128 north (exit 45 towards Gloucester), take exit 20A and follow Rte. 1A north, Rte. 1A north becomes County Road in Ipswich, go straight to stay on County Road when 1A splits off, County Road becomes East Street, from East Street turn left on Jeffrey's Neck Road, go approximately ½ mile, you will pass the Sisters of Notre Dame on the left, Strawberry Hill property is on the left.

## **OUR MISSION**

The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is charged with the care and oversight of the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Massachusetts. As the state's primary land management and natural resource planning agency, the DEM is a steward for a significant portion of the state's biodiversity and open spaces, and aims to provide public recreational and education opportunities that are diverse, affordable, environmentally sound, and accessible for all.

Since the first state park was purchased in 1898, DEM has acquired additional lands to enlarge, enhance, and protect the 300 facilities we now own and manage, which comprise the tenth largest state forest and park system in the nation. DEM's properties range from Cape Cod and the Islands to the Berkshires, and include ocean beaches, freshwater lakes and ponds, campgrounds, skating rinks and swimming pools, expansive forests and woodlands, mansions and gardens, open fields and meadows, wetlands, floodplain forests, farms, and ridgetops.

## LAND ACQUISITION PRIORITIES

Massachusetts is favored with an abundant variety of vivid landscapes and habitats. Forests and marshes, farms and coastline, ridgelines and meadows, rivers and lakes, all intertwine and stretch from the state's lengthy coastline to the Connecticut River Valley to the Berkshire Highlands. Unfortunately, much of this rich legacy is increasingly threatened by accelerating patterns of development. Unmanaged development poses a threat to our remaining fragmented open space. Unplanned development threatens the integrity of the state's unique ecoregions, the long-term viability of rare species, and the historic and aesthetic New England character of communities. One of the methods by which DEM works to address the complex challenge of growth is the direct acquisition of land and property interests to protect these special values and unique landscapes.

Natural resource protection and outdoor recreation are the primary purposes for which DEM acquires land. Presently, the top priorities, as listed below, include seven resource protection focus areas, three recreational themes, and the enhancement of the existing DEM forests and parks.

## RESOURCE PROTECTION

### **Primary Focus Areas**

- Greenways
- Representative Natural Communities
- Large Unfragmented Areas
- Coastal Resources and Access

### **Secondary Focus Areas**

- Water Resource Protection
- Scenic Landscapes
- Historic Landscapes and Archaeological Resources

## RECREATION

- Bikeways
- Freshwater-Based Recreation
- Camping

## MANAGEMENT/ENHANCEMENT

- Critical Adjacent Lands
- Universal Access



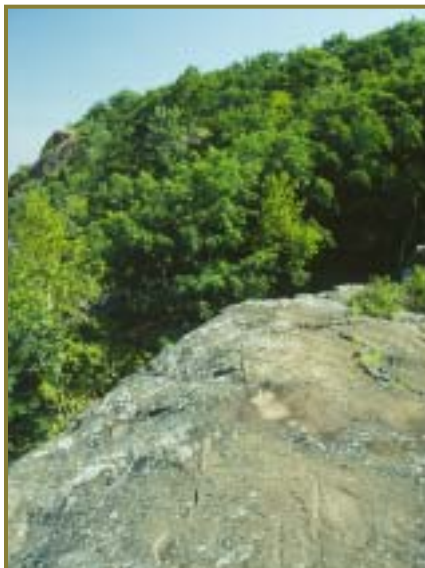
## MOUNTAINS AND RIDGETOPS

During fiscal year 2002, DEM protected several of the Commonwealth's most visible landscape features: our mountains and ridgetops. The Commonwealth's mountains are critical pieces of the scenic landscape; they frame our surroundings and possess regional significance and provide important habitat for many species of plants and animals. The following projects illustrate how DEM worked with several partners to preserve the integrity of these important landscapes.

### **Mount Tom, Holyoke**

Lying next to the Connecticut River and across from the Mount Holyoke Range, Mount Tom is one of the Commonwealth's most recognizable and ecologically important land features. While DEM already owns and manages the 2200 acre Mount Tom State Reservation, the recent protection of an additional 396 acres (the former Ski Area) was a major step forward in assuring that the mountain's special resources will remain intact. Those resources include threatened and endangered species of reptiles and amphibians, more than 120 species of birds, old growth trees reaching 130 feet or more into the air, and scenic views down the river valley as far away as Hartford, Connecticut.

The acquisition of the Mount Tom Ski Area concluded a long and arduous negotiation effort. When the downhill ski operation failed in 1998, an existing trap rock quarry operation began to take its place as a revenue producer. Encouraged by wide-ranging citizen support, DEM partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Trustees of Reservations, and the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Holyoke to secure the \$3 million property. The acquisition will allow future generations to enjoy a premier natural site just minutes from the Holyoke-Springfield metropolitan area. Under the aegis of the three resource agencies, the bulk of the land will be retained for woodlands, wildlife, and hiking trails, and 21 acres that included the former ski lodge will be used as a day camp by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Holyoke. Due to the existence of a contract



THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT TOM SKI AREA INCLUDES HABITATS RANGING FROM BARE TRAPROCK OUTCROPS TO MATURE WOODLANDS AND VERNAL POOLS

that was in effect prior to the sale, quarry operations will continue on the mountain. However, under the terms of the sale, quarrying will be limited to a period of no more than ten years and will be confined to ten acres.

### **Mount Watatic, Ashburnham and Ashby**

In addition to protecting Mount Tom, DEM partnered with the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement (DFWELE), the Ashburnham Conservation Trust and the Ashby Land Trust, to acquire 281 acres of land known as Mount Watatic. The Ashby Land Trust received a generous gift from Tom Mikes, an abutter of the mountain and owner of the southeast peak, that allowed the Trust to contribute heavily towards the purchase price. The Ashby Land Trust also acquired loans to meet their pledge from three conservation organizations: The Trustees of Reservations, Norcross Foundation and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, without whose participation this long-sought property might have remained in private hands and been crowned with a telecommunications tower.

Mount Watatic, with an elevation of 1832 feet, has long been a popular destination for hikers and naturalists who wish to experience the scenic views that are afforded in all directions from its bald summit. Hikers can see Mount Monadnock, Little Watatic, and Wachusett Mountain, and, on clear days, Mount Greylock and the Boston skyline. The summit, wetlands, slopes, and ponds located on the subject property lie between lands owned by DEM's Ashburnham State Forest and DFWELE's Watatic Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary and Ashby Wildlife Management Area. The mountain is also a popular site for viewing the migrations of Monarch butterflies, hawks, and dragonflies. The abundant wildlife attracts national hiking, birding, and conservation groups to the area. There are indications that rare species of flora may exist on and near the summit and in the lowlands below. The property features a variety of rocky outcrops, steep slopes, seeps and wet lowlands providing habitats for a wide range of plants and animals. Mostly wooded with mixed deciduous and coniferous species, including a red spruce forest near the summit, Mount Watatic offers truly unique habitat to explore.

### **Pocumtuck Range, Deerfield**

This year, DEM also embarked on an effort to protect the Pocumtuck Range in Deerfield, in partnership with the Valley Land Fund and the Deerfield Land Trust. The Pocumtuck Range is a significant landform in the Connecticut River Valley and is a prominent feature in the region. The Ridge has talus slopes and several scenic outlooks which provide long

expansive views of the valley. There is an informal hiking trail that runs for about 8 miles along the ridgetop from Mt. Sugarloaf State Reservation up to northern Deerfield. Recent research also shows that the range supports a diversity of plant species, some of which are rare and endangered. The overall goals of this ongoing effort are to conserve the Pocumtuck Range for its scenic, natural and recreational values, and to create a ridgetop greenway that links a number of protected properties from Mount Sugarloaf in the south to the Great Falls Discovery center in the north. DEM made significant progress in this endeavor by acquiring the Ainsworth, Grogan, Hawks, Krogh, and Valley Land Fund properties.

### **Chestnut Hill Neighborhood Conservation Project, Orange**

Chestnut Hill is located in Eastern Franklin County, at the intersection of the Towns of Orange, Wendell, and New Salem. A north-south running ridge, it straddles the Quabbin Reservoir and Millers River watersheds, and includes the highest point in Orange at 1,247 feet. The summit of Chestnut Hill, which can be accessed via a loop trail off of Chestnut Hill Road, affords a spectacular view east to Mount Wachusett. The northern flank provides a view to Mount Monadnock. Chestnut Hill is largely forested in mixed hardwoods and conifers. There are a few small ponds and vernal pools, numerous streams, extensive wetlands, and about 50 acres of open fields. In addition, Coolidge Swamp, located at the base of the Hill's north flank, contains a blue heron rookery that typically sees 25 nesting pairs a season. Bear, bobcat, and moose are regular visitors to the area, which provides habitat for many wildlife species.

This year, DEM, working in partnership with the Chestnut Hill landowners and the New England Forestry Foundation, conserved approximately 320 acres of forestland on Chestnut Hill. These efforts included acquisition of four conservation restrictions, and the fee acquisition of 64 acres that encompasses most of Coolidge Swamp. The Town acquired conservation restrictions on an additional 200 acres at the heart of the Chestnut Hill neighborhood with Self-Help and local funds, protecting the site of the well-known garlic and arts festival. The success of this project was due in large part to the landowners who were committed to conserving their land and the rural character of their neighborhood. Working together enabled the landowners, New England Forestry Foundation, the Town, and DEM to accomplish far more than any one organization could have accomplished on its own.

### **South Hadley Fire District property, Hadley**

When the Town of South Hadley sold its fire district land to DEM, the

core of the Mount Holyoke Range was secured. The 615 acre parcel lies within over 3500 acres of DEM's Mount Holyoke Range State Park, Skinner State Park, and South Hadley conservation land. Purchased from South Hadley Fire District #2, the land area includes Lithia Springs Reservoir, a former water supply containing pristine water.

This was the largest single acquisition on the Mount Holyoke Range since the establishment of the park. The parcel includes an extremely wide range of natural conditions, from the pristine lake to intermittent and perennial streams to bald rock outcrops on top of the ridge. The hydrology, geology and southern aspect of the property give rise to special, and in some cases, rare, plant species. The few old roads connect with existing foot trails in the park, such as the M&M Trail and the Low Place Trail.

## WATERSHED PROTECTION

The Department of Environmental Management played an important role this year in working to protect the water resources of the Commonwealth. One of the most significant ways in which we accomplished this was through our participation in the recently reinstated Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Aquifer Land Acquisition Program. The Aquifer Land Acquisition (ALA) Program provides grants to cities, towns, and water districts for the acquisition of lands and waters to protect groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, surface water supplies, watershed areas, and surface or underground lands adjacent to public water supplies. As a condition of the grant, DEM received a conservation restriction on many of the properties acquired through this program. In addition to the DEP ALA program, DEM acquired several properties outright that serve as significant additions to our state forests and parks as well as provide watershed and water supply protection.

### **Lakeville ALA Project**

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Environmental Management and the Division of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement worked in partnership with the Town of Lakeville, the City of New Bedford, the City of Taunton, and the Trust for Public Land to protect Betty's Neck in Lakeville. Protection of the 480-acre Betty's Neck property was part of an agreement to permanently protect 3,583 acres of municipal watershed land in Lakeville, Middleboro, Rochester, Freetown, New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Acushnet.

With more than 2.5 miles of waterfront on Assawompsett Pond, the largest natural fresh water body in Massachusetts, Betty's Neck has long been one of the region's top conservation priorities. The Assawompsett Pond Complex is the sole source of drinking water for New Bedford and Taunton. It also supports the largest alewife fishery in the state, and provides habitat for several rare wildlife species.

### **Springfield Water and Sewer Commission ALA Project, Blandford, Granville, Tolland, and Belchertown**

DEM partnered with the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC) to protect 20 parcels totaling nearly 1340 acres located in the Towns of Blandford, Granville, Tolland, and Belchertown. As an additional layer of protection, DEM was granted a conservation restriction on these parcels, which are owned by the SWSC.

Acquisition of these properties provides protection for the metro-Springfield area water supply by providing a buffer to both the Cobble Mountain Reservoir and Borden Brook Reservoir. Several brooks traverse these properties including Ripley Brook, Henry Brook, Tunnery Brook, Bedlum Brook, and Watson Brook. Each of these brooks flow into the Cobble Mountain Reservoir or the Borden Brook Reservoir.

Many of these properties have been identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as Unprotected Core Habitat on the BioMap. One of the largest properties, the 825-acre Sprague parcel abuts the 3780-acre Tolland State Forest with a shared boundary of over 2½ miles. With a mix of both wetlands and uplands, the properties provide diverse habitat for a number of wildlife species including black bear, moose, deer, and beaver. These properties will be open for passive recreation such as hiking.

### **Levinger property, Shutesbury and Wendell**

A wide diversity of topography and aspects on the Levinger tract makes it an attractive addition and buffer to Lake Wyola, a 129-acre kettle hole lake that is the headwater source of the Sawmill River. Protection of



HEADWATERS OF PEBBLES BROOK,  
COBBLE MTN. RESERVE, BLANDFORD

the “bowl” surrounding Lake Wyola, which includes DEM’s Lake Wyola State Park, is critical to the water quality of the Sawmill River. The Levinger tract also contains the beginnings of Tyler Brook. The clean waters of the two rivers support an excellent trout population. Under the terms of the restriction, the landowners will continue professional forest management of the area, in part by retaining early successional habitats for deer browse and shrubby open conditions favored by grouse, towhees, chestnut-sided warblers and goldfinches. Beaver dams along the lower portions of Tyler Brook have created a flowage that abuts an open pine stand along the edge, providing an excellent view over the water to observe herons and wood ducks.

The 220-acre site includes much of a large, perfectly cone-shaped land feature known as Ames Hill. At 2000 feet in elevation, it is the highest point over the lake. The parcel generates considerable interest locally for its historical context.

#### **Town of Hatfield property, Hatfield**

DEM purchased a conservation restriction on 354.4 acres from the Town of Hatfield to add to other protected land that includes two large adjacent wooded tracts permanently protected under the Federal Forest Legacy Program of the U.S. Forest Service. The Hatfield property is largely uneven age transition forest with large white pine, northern red oak, beech, hemlock and red maple interspersed with a few open areas and

VIEW FROM THE POCUMTUCK RIDGE LOOKING TOWARD MOUNT TOBY





vernal wetlands. This mosaic gives rise to a remarkable diversity of animal and bird life, including bear, bobcat, wood turtles, spotted salamanders, eastern spotted newts, whippoorwills, pileated woodpeckers, barred owls, American redstarts and black-throated green warblers. A stream traverses the property and flows into the Mill River.

The Town of Hatfield used the proceeds it received from this sale to acquire an additional 59 acres of land that will further protect the watershed.

## PARTNERSHIPS

DEM continues to recognize that our partners, such as land trusts, non-profit organizations, municipalities, counties, and federal agencies, are essential to the continued success of our program and to many of the land protection efforts across the Commonwealth. In addition to the partnerships mentioned elsewhere in the report, the following partnerships were invaluable in DEM's land protection efforts.

### Legg Farm, Uxbridge

Through a collaborative partnership between DEM, the Town of Uxbridge, and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), approximately 42 acres of open space was permanently protected at the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park. Once planned to be a 24-lot subdivision, this

### DEM is fortunate to have worked with numerous partners in fiscal year 2002 including:

Ashburnham Conservation Trust	Friends of the Mashpee National	New England Forestry Foundation
Ashby Land Trust	Wildlife Refuge	The Nature Conservancy
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater	Town of Ipswich	Norcross Wildlife Foundation
Holyoke	Jones River Watershed	Office of Coastal Zone
Compact of Cape Cod	Association	Management
Conservation Trusts	Town of Kingston	Orenda Wildlife Trust
Deerfield Land Trust	Nashoba Conservation Trust	Town of Pepperell
Department of Environmental	Egremont Land Trust	Springfield Water and Sewer
Protection	Greater Worcester Land Trust	Commission
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife	Town of Lakeville	The 300 Committee of Falmouth
and Environmental Law	Massachusetts Historical	City of Taunton
Enforcement	Commission	The Trust for Public Land
Department of Food and	Metropolitan District Commission	The Trustees of Reservations
Agriculture	Mount Grace Land Conservation	Town of Rowley
Executive Office of Environmental	Trust	Town of Uxbridge
Affairs	National Oceanic and Atmospheric	United States Fish and Wildlife
EOEA – Division of Conservation	Administration	Service
Services	National Park Service	United States Forest Service
Franklin Land Trust	City of New Bedford	Valley Land Fund

property builds on an already existing contiguous open space system that abuts both the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park and the town-owned Pout Pond. This acquisition will provide additional protection for the Blackstone River, protect the viewshed from the River Bend Farm Visitor Center, and maintain farmland. This property also possesses significant historic and archaeological resources.

Both the Town of Uxbridge and DEM contributed to this acquisition, \$75,000 and \$250,000, respectively. DEM holds a conservation restriction on the property and the Town owns the underlying fee interest.

### **Thompson Island, Boston**

The last unprotected privately-owned island in Boston Harbor was conserved by DEM and the National Park Service (NPS) in 2002. One of Boston's top conservation priorities, Thompson Island remained the focus of a protection effort spanning over 20 years.

In an unprecedented partnership, DEM and the Park Service will jointly hold a conservation restriction on the 240-acre property. The agreement prohibits any future development on 80% of the island—some 195 acres—and limits future development on the island's existing 45-acre school campus. The \$4 million purchase price was shared equally by each agency.

The restriction, which was purchased from the Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, guarantees permanent public access to the island and allows Outward Bound to continue its educational operation. The acquisition will allow for public access to the island on weekends and summer holidays for hiking, fishing, beachcombing, boating, picnicking, and bird watching. Outward Bound, which operates the ferry service serving the island, will work with the Boston Harbor Island Partnership to implement and oversee public access under the terms of the restriction.

Like the other harbor islands, Thompson Island compellingly mixes natural beauty with American history. The island offers stunning views of the Boston skyline and surrounding harbor; a network of trails link bucolic fields, oak woodlands, salt marshes, and beaches. Native Americans first occupied the island as early as 10,000 years ago. The first colonial settlement was in 1626, when a trader named David Thompson established an outpost on the island for trading with the Neponset Indians. The Soton Farm and Trade School conducted vocational and agricultural training on the island in the 19th century.

Now, with the conclusion of this conservation project, the resources and history of Thompson Island will be preserved for future generations.

### **Strawberry Hill property, Ipswich**

In another innovative partnership project, DEM teamed with the Town of Ipswich, The Trust for Public Land, and private conservation buyers to protect one of the largest coastal tracts remaining on the North Shore. The total acquisition cost to the Town and DEM was \$3.5 million.

The transaction involved a \$500,000 commitment from DEM and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a \$2 million contribution from the Town of Ipswich, and private conservation buyers. Private conservation buyers were brought in by TPL to acquire the historic structures on the property. The Town of Ipswich now owns the land surrounding the 14-acre lot on which the historic structures are located, and DEM holds a conservation restriction on the Town land. The Town also holds a restriction on the 14-acre lot that limits the type and intensity of uses, and the conservation buyers agreed to abide by historic preservation restrictions that affect the buildings themselves.

The property, locally known as Strawberry Hill, contains a drumlin with striking 360 degree views of the Great Marsh. An extensive area of coastal salt marshes, the Great Marsh covers portions of the towns of Ipswich, Rowley, Newburyport and Essex and is the largest salt marsh system north of Long Island, New York. The parcel consists of extensive and undisturbed salt marsh, marsh islands, grassland habitat, frontage on the Eagle Hill River, and several historic structures. A variety of state and federal agencies and non-profit entities own adjacent properties creating a mosaic of protected land.

The parcel will provide significant coastal access for the general public. A small parking lot will be created to allow for hiking, fishing, and bird watching. Small, non-motorized vessels could also be carried from the parking area and launched at the shoreline.

### **Hawes III, Freetown and Fall River**

As the third phase of a multi-phase acquisition project that created the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioserve, DEM and the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement (DFWELE) acquired 294 acres from the Hawes family. Beginning in 2000, DEM and DFWELE have acquired a total of 3,363 acres which became part of the nearly 14,000 acre Bioserve located in Freetown and Fall River. This project has been accomplished through a public-private partnership among the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), DEM, DFWELE, and the Trustees of Reservations (TTOR).

In the last phase of this acquisition, the Trustees of Reservations on August 1, 2002, acquired the remaining 473 acres of the Hawes property. This capped the partners' acquisition effort to create the Bioreserve. Referred to as the Copicut Woods property, the TTOR land is a wooded tract that was once an old farmstead and possesses vernal pools and breeding habitat for several endangered amphibians. This property will serve as the gateway to the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve.

### **Mizzenmast property, Mashpee**

When a developer found 17 Native American burial sites on a quarter acre house lot within the New Seabury subdivision in Mashpee, a wide variety of organizations came to the parcel's rescue. The Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, EOE's Conservation Services, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, DEM, and the Trust for Public Land all became strong proponents of the property's protection.

A complicated deal yielded an elegantly simple result. A bargain sale price of \$180,000 was negotiated with the owner, well below the appraised value of \$220,000 for the unrestricted fee interest in the property. TPL then pre-acquired the parcel and sold a Historic Preservation/Conservation Restriction (HP/CR) to DEM & MHC for \$200,000 (MHC contributed \$50,000; DEM, \$50,000; and Conservation Services \$100,000). Finally, TPL gifted the restricted fee interest to the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe. The \$20,000 difference between the two sales allowed TPL to cover its costs and establish an endowment to the tribe dedicated for management of the property.

The parcel will become a small memorial park for the members of the Jonas family and other Wampanoag Indians who are believed to be buried on the site.

## **WORKING LANDSCAPES**

DEM has strived over the years to protect the working landscapes of Massachusetts, such as farmland and forest management. By maintaining working landscapes we can protect the historic character of the Commonwealth, provide important habitat for numerous species, protect natural resources, and maintain the local tax base.

### **Tully Valley Private Forest Lands Initiative, Warwick, Orange, and Royalston**

Fiscal year 2002 was the second year of the Executive Office of

Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Tully Valley Private Forest Lands Initiative. This initiative works to protect one of the largest contiguous tracts of forest land in southern New England. The acquisition efforts center in the Tully River Valley within the Towns of Royalston, Orange, Athol, and Warwick. Throughout this initiative, DEM has collaborated with EOEA, the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement, the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, and other members of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership. During fiscal year 2001, DEM protected 2,259 acres as part of this initiative. In fiscal year 2002, DEM protected an additional 26 properties totaling 1020.58 acres towards this effort.

This acquisition project seeks to protect private forest land through the acquisition of conservation restrictions. These restrictions allow for sustainable and sound management of forest resources and encourage long-term, professional stewardship of the land. Most of the properties protected will remain in private ownership, but cannot be developed or converted to other non-forestry uses. The addition of the newly conserved properties will create a landscape-scale protected area capable of providing suitable habitat for large woodland animals like moose, bear, fisher, deer, coyote, and bobcat, as well as forest-dwelling songbirds.

#### **Antell property, Spencer and East Brookfield**

DEM worked with the Greater Worcester Land Trust to protect this 278-acre property in Spencer and East Brookfield through a conservation restriction. Historically managed as farmland, it will continue to be managed as an active farm and provide for forest management. This diverse, scenic property features open fields, forest, vernal pools and wetlands, traversed by numerous trails. It also hosts several rare species.



ANTELL PROPERTY, SPENCER AND EAST BROOKFIELD

## CRITICAL AND DIVERSE HABITAT

Massachusetts is home to an abundant variety of vivid landscapes and habitats. Forests and marshes, farms and coastline, ridgelines and meadows, rivers and lakes, all intertwine and stretch from the state's lengthy coastline to the Berkshire Highlands.

### **Brockway property, South Hadley**

This 44-acre tract is situated on the Mount Holyoke Range and nests neatly within other land recently acquired by DEM. It was treated as a high priority for protection, because in the summer of 2000, UMass botanists identified a large pocket of a tree species previously not known to exist in Massachusetts, and one that is typically found in coastal plain areas in states much farther to the south. In addition, other sensitive habitats, including vernal pools and rock outcrops, are found in abundance, adding to the diversity of the landscape. The property includes two separate parcels, one with a conservation restriction preventing incompatible use, and another in full fee acquisition.

### **Howes property, Ashfield**

The Howes acquisition contains a wide array of habitats, from deep marsh to sugar maple forest, to an isolated beaver impoundment harboring great blue herons and mink. Situated along the Swift River in Ashfield, the parcel lies a short distance from DEM's DAR State Forest. DEM, The Franklin Land Trust, and The Norcross Wildlife Foundation each contributed to the permanent protection of the 151-acre property.

The Swift River, a tributary of the Westfield River, flows through a small valley with adjacent habitat known to have a population of a rare species of turtles. The east-west orientation of the property provides a long corridor up and over heavily wooded hills and connects to remote interior wetlands and uplands. Moose and coyotes have been observed in the area. DEM holds a conservation



HOWES PROPERTY



restriction on the site, with management and oversight by local residents who contributed to the acquisition. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation holds fee title to the property.

### **Shores property, Bernardston**

This 318-acre tract, acquired in partnership with the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, adds to a growing body of protected land in an area referred to generally as Satan's Kingdom, near the Connecticut River. Last year a similar transaction with the Norcross Wildlife Foundation secured 832 acres that abuts Vermont's 1,300-acre Roaring Brook Wildlife Management Area. This recent transaction protects mostly forested, hilly land that contains large hemlocks in steep ravines, vernal pools, and black gum pocket swamps as well as part of the Falls River as it wends its way toward the Connecticut. Large ranging animals such as moose and bear as well as bobcat, coyote and fisher have been sighted in this area. Old woods roads leading into the interior of the property provide good hiking and birding opportunities.

### **Newman property, Florida**

The Newman property lies in a quiet valley in Florida, MA just up the road from the Deerfield River. The parcel is adjacent to The Nature Conservancy (TNC)'s Reed Brook Preserve and DEM's Mohawk Trail State Forest.

The Reed Brook Preserve contains the largest exposed serpentine rock outcrop in Massachusetts. Serpentine is a grayish-green rock, rare in the Commonwealth, containing magnesium and heavy metals such as chromium. A portion of the serpentine rock outcrop extends onto the 89-acre Newman property. A variety of unusual plants are attracted to the elements found in the serpentine rock. A lichen survey done at Reed Brook in 1995 identified 71 species, including several species associated with serpentine or found on moss growing on serpentine.

DEM and TNC split the \$47,000 sale price with TNC retaining the fee interest and DEM holding a conservation restriction. The acquisition prevented a planned timber harvest which could have compromised the sensitive plant community on the parcel.

The forest at the Reed Brook Preserve is primarily a mature birch, beech, maple association with some hemlock and white pine. The under-story consists of a rich mix of ferns and wood sorrel. An old logging road traverses the property's steep hillside, providing access to the interior forest.

## STRETCHING STATE DOLLARS

In these times of fiscal uncertainty, DEM has been successful in its considerable effort to stretch our state dollars and leverage additional funding by partnering with various federal, state, and nonprofit entities. In fact, DEM has received nearly \$4.2 million over the past three years from various federal grants to acquire additional land. DEM has also been the beneficiary of several generous individuals who have chosen to gift property interests to DEM or sell properties at significant bargain sale prices. These gifts and bargain sales qualify for charitable tax deductions. Each of these properties will be incorporated into the state forest and parks system.

### **Lucander and Robar properties, Westminster**

DEM land acquisition dollars must be stretched Commonwealth-wide for land protection. It is fortunate that important lands abutting Wachusett Mountain State Reservation and Leominster State Forest can be purchased by the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. This Fund was established under an agreement with DEM and Wachusett Mountain Associates, the lease holders who run the ski area at the mountain. A percentage of the gross annual revenue goes into the fund for DEM land acquisitions. The fund has figured prominently in several recent projects. Recently, the top of Crow Hill was purchased using these funds. Known as the Robar property, 55 acres of sloped upland forests and wetlands off of East Road in Westminster, the acquisition adds another piece to the corridor between Wachusett Mountain State Reservation and Leominster State Forest that will protect views along the Mid-State Trail and provide a protected animal corridor along the wetlands, streams and ponds that link these two popular DEM parks.

The Land Acquisition Trust also purchased the Lucander property as an addition to the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. DEM received the property as a no-cost transfer from the Trust. The 41.79 acre forested parcel has 200 feet of frontage on the westerly side of West Princeton Road directly across from the North Road trailhead. The objective of the acquisition was to maintain the rural, undeveloped character of West Princeton Road and eventually establish a corridor connection to Fitchburg water supply lands and MDC Ware River watershed lands to the west. This potential greenway could stretch from Leominster State Forest southwest to Rutland State Forest.

### **Govoni and McGuire properties, Falmouth:**

DEM acquired two tracts of land totaling approximately 18.5 acres

with assistance from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBN-ERR). The NOAA funding allowed DEM to purchase the parcels in a part of the state with escalating real estate prices.

The Childs River runs through these now protected properties on its way to Waquoit Bay. The bay represents the most extensive, largely unaltered estuarine system on the south shore of Cape Cod. This acquisition will protect the water quality of Waquoit Bay and improve the viability of area shellfish beds and spawning grounds.

A grant from NOAA provided most of the funding for this acquisition. The NOAA grant provided \$220,000 of the combined \$230,000 sale price, with DEM contributing the remaining \$10,000. DEM was joined by numerous partners to complete the transaction. Additional assistance came from The 300 Committee of Falmouth (a local land trust), the Orenda Wildlife Trust, the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts and the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge.

The parcels sit within the boundaries of three state and federal environmental jurisdictions: the Commonwealth's Waquoit Bay Area of Critical Environmental Concern; the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve; and the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge.

**DEM was fortunate to benefit from numerous grant programs that provide funding for land protection projects. These grant programs include:**

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
  - National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Land Acquisition Grant
- Land Acquisition Trust (Wachusett)

**Walent property, Pepperell**

Acquisition of the Walent property resulted in the protection of 46 acres located on the Nashua River in Pepperell. DEM partnered with the Nashoba Conservation Trust to protect this property, which provides access to the river for fishing and canoeing and protects several acres of floodplain forest and an important habitat area. Within months of the Walent acquisition, the Town of Pepperell acquired an abutting railroad right of way which links several protected properties along the Nashua River and provides improved public access to this and other conservation land in the area.

DEM received \$83,000 through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) assistance program for this property. This

grant reimbursed DEM for 50% of the cost of this acquisition project. The LWCF is administered in Massachusetts by EOE's Division of Conservation Services.

### **Hosmer Woods, Orange**

Protection of the Hosmer Woods property was made possible through the generosity of Fred Heyes. Fred Heyes gifted a conservation restriction on this 198-acre property which is located in Orange, just south of Warwick State Forest. This property will be open to the public for passive recreation and provides protection for the riparian ecosystem of the nearby Millers River. The conservation restriction also allows for the sustainable and sound management of forest resources.

## **THE CONSERVATION TRUST**

The Department of Environmental Management is proud of its role as steward of some of the most scenic natural resources in the Commonwealth. The increased cost of land acquisition and competing demands on state resources challenge us as we strive to continue to acquire the many additional properties that need our protection. We welcome you to join us and help us to reach our next conservation milestone.

Your contribution to DEM's Conservation Trust will help DEM attain our goal of acquiring ecologically critical parcels of land and promote recreational opportunities to the public. Donations are also needed for the perpetual care and stewardship of these valuable properties.

The Conservation Trust was established in 1990 by the Massachusetts General Court as a way for citizens to contribute to the recreational and conservation interests of the Commonwealth. Tax-deductible contributions can also be designated for particular parks or programs of the donor's choice.

For more information on how you, too, can be a steward of the Commonwealth's lands through a contribution to the Conservation Trust, contact Sharon Hoey at 617-626-1267.